

SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE

KENT CONRAD, CHAIRMAN

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STATEMENT BY SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KENT CONRAD (D-ND) ON BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S LATEST COST ESTIMATE OF POTENTIAL WAR WITH IRAQ December 31, 2002

The reality is no one knows how much it will cost us to wage war with Iraq. Mitch Daniels' \$50 billion to \$60 billion estimate is as viable as Larry Lindsey's \$100 billion to \$200 billion estimate in September. So much depends on the duration and type of combat operations as well as the presence, duration and size of a peacekeeping force.

Just three months ago, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that depending on these yet to be determined factors, costs could range from as little as \$21 billion for a one month heavy air war with no occupation, to more than \$272 billion for three months of combat with a heavy ground force and a five year occupation by a large US force.

Should the President commit our troops to war, these decisions should be made based on America's national security interests. Should we wage war, however, it will be costly. Mitch Daniels admitted to the New York Times, "All of these are major costs." Yet despite this potential new expense, the Bush administration continues with its ill fated economic policy of more tax cuts for the wealthy, bigger deficits for the American people, and growing debt for our children and grandchildren. When will this administration adjust its economic policies to reflect the realities of today?

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